

REMARKS

Claims 1-37 are pending. Claims 1, 2, 4, 8, 10-17, 21, 24-31 and 35 have been amended. Claims 1 and 2 are the only independent claims.

Claims 1, 2 and 4-9 were objected to due to certain informalities. As to the objections to claims 1 and 2, the changes suggested by the Examiner have been effected. With regard to claims 4-9, those claims have been amended to remove the redundant recitation of the insertion portion.

Claims 1-37 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. The claims have been carefully reviewed and amended as deemed necessary. It is believed that the rejection under Section 112, second paragraph, has been obviated, and its withdrawal is therefore respectfully requested.

Claims 1-3, 10-15, 18, 19, 22-29, 32, 33, 36 and 37 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) over U.S. Patent 4,539,586 (Danna et al.). Claims 1-4, 10, 12-15, 18, 19, 24, 26-29, 32 and 33 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) over U.S. Patent Published Application US 2004/0133075 (Motoki et al.). Claims 16, 17, 30 and 31 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 over Danna et al. Claims 20, 21, 34, 35 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 over Danna et al. in view of U.S. Patent 6,295,082 (Dowdy et al.).

Amended claim 1 is directed to an endoscope apparatus comprising: a scope unit including: an insertion portion to be inserted in an inspection object space, an observation unit for observation disposed in a tip end of the insertion portion, and a base unit connected to a base end of the insertion portion; and a fixed unit to which the base unit is detachably connected. At least one of a connector on the side of the base unit and a connector on the side of the fixed unit in a connector portion is disposed in a detachable portion of the base unit and the fixed unit is a movable connector,

which is movable in a direction perpendicular to an axial direction of the movable connector, and the detachable portion includes a positioning section for performing positioning which enables the connector on the side of the fixed connector and the connector on the side of the base unit to be connected to each other.

Danna et al. shows a movable connector ,76, 77 and 81 in Figure 3, that is movable forwards and backwards in its axial direction. On the other hand, the movable connector recited in amended claim 1 is movable in a direction perpendicular to its own axial direction. Support for this recitation is found in the specification at least at page 20, lines 17-26 and Figure 9A. For at least this reason, amended claim 1 is believed clearly patentable over Danna et al., which does not teach a movable connector movable in a direction perpendicular to its axial direction.

Amended independent claim 2 recites a similar feature and is distinguished over Danna et al. for at least the same reasons as claim 1.

Motoki et al. relates to a bracket that enables a linking portion 4b to be detachably held by a remote controller 16. On the other hand, the invention to which the independent claims are directed relates to connection (e.g., electrical connection and optical connection) between the scope unit and the fixed unit. For at least this reason, Motoki et al. is completely different in technique from the present invention, as claimed.

For at least the foregoing reasons, the independent claim are believed patentable over Motoki et al. as well.

The other claims in this application are each dependent from one or another of the independent claims discussed above and are therefore believed patentable for the same reasons. Since each dependent claim is also deemed to define an additional

aspect of the invention, however, the individual reconsideration of the patentability of each on its own merits is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully requests favorable reconsideration and early passage to issue of the present application.

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